

Frequently Asked Questions

◆ Which vehicles in Louisiana are required to undergo an emissions inspection?

Vehicles subject to emission testing are model years 1980 or newer gasoline fueled passenger cars and gasoline-fueled light and heavy-duty trucks with a gross vehicle weight rating (gvwr) of 10,000 pounds or less, which are registered in the 5-parish Baton Rouge ozone nonattainment area (Ascension, East Baton Rouge, Iberville, Livingston, and West Baton Rouge parishes). These tests include the visual anti-tampering, gas cap integrity, and on-board diagnostics (OBD II). Approximately 400,000 vehicles are subject to emissions testing in the Baton Rouge area.

◆ What does a visual anti-tampering check of the emission system include?

This check will include a visual inspection of the following emission control system components: catalytic converter system (catalyst), air injection system (AIS including belts, hoses, and valves), positive crankcase ventilation system (PCV system including hoses and valves), evaporative emission control system (charcoal canister, hoses, wires, and control valves), and exhaust gas recirculation system (EGR valve and hoses).

◆ What is a gas cap integrity test?

This pressure test detects leaks in the vehicle's gas cap, ensuring a proper seal, thereby reducing harmful vapors.

◆ What is OBD II?

OBD II is the second generation of onboard computer systems created as a requirement of the 1990 Clean Air Act (CAA) to alert the driver of any problems that may lead to abnormal emission levels being released from a vehicle. Technicians plug into a vehicle's OBD port to determine if there are problems that need to be addressed. OBD II tests can save the consumer time and money in the long run because smaller problems are detected and solved early so major problems do not develop. For example, a poorly performing spark plug can cause the engine to misfire (a condition possibly unnoticed by the driver) and can degrade the performance of the catalytic converter. With OBD II detection of the engine misfire, the driver would be faced with a relatively inexpensive spark plug repair. However, without OBD II detection, the driver could be faced with a more expensive catalytic converter repair, in addition to the spark plug repair.

◆ What happens if a vehicle fails the emissions inspection?

Vehicles failing any component of emissions testing must be repaired before a valid inspection sticker can be issued for the vehicle. Vehicles failing the inspection will receive a 30-day temporary sticker.

◆ Are there any vehicles exempt from emissions inspections?

Beginning July 1, 2004, new vehicles will be exempt from computer diagnostic testing for two years from the year model of the vehicle (i.e. 2005 model vehicles are exempt from the On-Board Diagnostics (OBD II) portion of the test until 2007). Exempted vehicles are still required to receive the visual anti-tampering check and the gas cap integrity test.

◆ Why does my vehicle need an emissions inspection?

Emissions from motor vehicles contribute to the formation of ground level ozone. In Baton Rouge, to achieve the required air quality standards, OBD II testing is utilized to identify and reduce vehicle emissions related problems. High pollution levels not only affect health of local citizens, but it also makes it more difficult to attract new business and industry and create new jobs in our community.

◆ When, where, and how are emissions inspection performed?

These new emissions tests are performed as part of your annual safety inspection at any official Motor Vehicle Inspection (MVI) Station in the Baton Rouge ozone nonattainment area during normal inspection hours. In addition to inspection of a vehicle's safety equipment, a visual anti-tampering check of your emissions system and a gas cap integrity test are performed. Vehicles that are 1996 and newer model years will be subject to an OBD II inspection.

◆ Are there any restrictions on where I can have my vehicle tested?

Vehicles registered within the 5-parish nonattainment area must be tested in the Baton Rouge testing area and cannot be tested elsewhere in the state. Vehicles registered outside of the Baton Rouge 5-parish area (except for the municipalities of Orleans, Kenner, and Westwego) can be tested within the 5-parish emissions testing area; however, the Baton Rouge area fees and testing procedures apply.

◆ How much does an emissions inspection cost?

The emissions inspection is combined with the annual safety inspection, and the combined cost is \$18 in the Baton Rouge ozone nonattainment area. Safety only inspections cost \$10.

◆ Do I have to pay to get my vehicle retested if it fails?

The temporary rejection sticker is valid for thirty days. During that time, you are entitled to one free retest at the station where you received the initial inspection. After the vehicle is repaired or the problem has been resolved, you can go back to the original inspection station within the thirty-day period and receive the free retest. If your vehicle fails again, you may have to pay for any subsequent inspections.

If at any time, you wish to challenge the inspection results, you may receive a free retest at the Emissions Inspection Challenge Station located at Louisiana Technical College (Port Allen campus) at 3233 Rosedale Road (near Port Allen High School). Appointments are available by calling (225) 342-8425. If the vehicle passes inspection at the Challenge Station, the original inspection station will be notified to issue a valid inspection sticker. The most common usage of the Challenge Station is when a vehicle fails for "non communication". It must be noted that the Challenge Station cannot resolve Diagnostic Trouble Codes and "readiness" issues but can only retest your vehicle to verify the results. Questions regarding these or any program issues can be directed to LDEQ at (225) 219-3570 or (225) 219-3574.

◆ How is vehicle compliance enforced?

Compliance with I/M program requirements for motor vehicles is enforced through the use of windshield stickers. Citations are issued by local and state law enforcement agencies for missing or expired stickers.

◆ How do inspection stations report inspection results to LDEQ?

All MVI Stations in the Baton Rouge nonattainment area have computer systems and software that transmit testing data electronically, via Internet, to a host computer located at LDEQ headquarters. The data is analyzed and periodically reported to EPA.